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TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE--REPORT ON AN EXPERIMENT.

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DURING THE FALL QUARTER OF 1965 AT KALAMAZOO COLLEGE, IN MICHIGAN, A FACULTY MEMBER AND A SENIOR STUDENT JOINTLY SHARED THE TEACHING OF TWO BEGINNING GERMAN COURSES WITH, IN EACH COURSE, SOPHOMORES AND SOME FRESHMEN FROM ALL ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS. THE STUDENT TEACHER, IN ADDITION TO HIGH SCHOOL AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDY, HAD SPENT A YEAR-AND-A-HALF IN GERMANY AND HAD THE PROFICIENCY NECESSARY FOR THE AUDIOLINGUAL APPROACH USED IN THE TEACHING. THE STUDENTS NEVER KNEW IN ADVANCE WHICH OF THE TWO WAS TO BE THEIR INSTRUCTOR, THOUGH IN THE WEEKLY DOUBLE SESSION BOTH PARTICIPATED. A QUESTIONNAIRE AT THE TIME OF THE FINAL EXAMINATION REVEALED THAT WHILE MOST STUDENTS HAD APPROVED OF THE EXPERIMENT, THE CONSENSUS STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF CAREFUL SELECTION OF THE STUDENT TEACHER. SOME FELT THAT THE STUDENT TEACHER, CLOSER TO THEIR OWN STATUS, HAD AT TIMES GIVEN EXPLANATIONS MORE CLEARLY THAN THE FULL-TIME FACULTY MEMBER. BOTH TEACHERS THOUGHT THAT THEIR OWN PARTICIPATION IN THE EXPERIMENT WAS A STIMULATING AND VALUABLE LEARNING EXPERIENCE. (GJ)

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Two Heads Are Better Than One: Report On An Experiment[1]

As a part of a program to investigate new teaching methods and to offer promising departmental senior majors an opportunity to acquire first-hand practical experience in teaching, the instructional responsibilities in two beginning classes in German in the Fall Quarter '65 were shared jointly by a regular full-time member of the faculty and a senior student. Participants in this experiment were Miss Kathleen O. Young and the author. Though the department has long relied upon students as laboratory assistants and also occasionally has permitted a student to substitute for a faculty member in a regular classroom session, this is the first time that a student has been used as an instructor on a regular full-time basis.

Miss Young, the student participant in the experiment, was a last-term senior in the department of German. Though she has had some instruction in German in high school, the bulk of her formal instruction in German has been at Kalamazoo College. In addition, Miss Young spent one year in Bonn, Germany. She studied at the University of Bonn under the Kalamazoo College Foreign Study Program and then elected to stay in Bonn an additional six months before returning to the United States. During these additional six months she was also enrolled in courses at the University. Miss Young has a very good command of German and speaks and understands the language without difficulty, which in no small part can be

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attributed to her stay in Germany. She had had no previous teaching experience, with the exception of an occasional tutoring session or laboratory class, until she participated in this experiment. Miss Young had been enrolled in several courses in the departments of education and psychology, but did not practice teach. In the spring of 1965 she had had an introductory course in linguistics, which in her estimation and in this writer's estimation proved invaluable.

The two classes taught in this experiment seemed ideal for control purposes. Both were first-quarter beginning classes. Students in the classes should have had no prior instruction in German, though in several instances this was not the case. Initially, twenty-five (25) students were enrolled in German 1c meeting at 8 A. M., twenty-eight (28) in German 1e meeting at 9 A. M.. of this number, twenty-four (24) completed the course, took the final examination and completed the questionnaire in the 8 o'clock class, twenty-seven (27) in the 9 o'clock class. The enrollment in both classes was predominantly from the sophomore class, forty-one (41) in all. There was a total of ten (10) freshman, evenly distributed among the two classes, and no juniors or seniors. Majors from all academic departments were represented. Each class met four (4) times weekly in three (3) periods of fifty (50) minute duration. In addition, the 8 o'clock class met once weekly for a double period of 100 minutes, while the 9 o'clock class met in its double period for 90 minutes. Consequently, it was once necessary to

schedule the 9 o'clock class for two double periods in the same week to make up for the time difference.

As a supplement to the regular classroom meetings all students attended two laboratory classes per week. These classes were under the direction of a German exchange student who assisted in the language department. As a general rule neither of the classroom instructors attended the laboratory sessions.

The text used in both classes was Goedsche-Spann, Deutsch für Amerikaner, revised edition. The nature of this widely-used text makes it possible to stress the importance of an aural-oral command of German without neglecting reading and writing skills. The commercially prepared tapes accompanying the text provided most of the laboratory material. Frequent dictations and quizzes which tested comprehension of spoken German were prepared by the course instructors and administered during the laboratory period.

The students who enrolled in these two sections of German 1 were not aware of the experimental nature of the two classes until the first day, when they were so informed by this writer. In introductory remarks at this time he told students that they were participants in an experiment, though perhaps unwilling, and asked for their cooperation. Though no students attempted to transfer out of the classes, it is undoubtedly safe to say that several greeted the announcement with less than enthusiasm.

No attempt was made to establish a schedule of teaching assignments. Thus the students never knew who would teach the class on a particular day until the instructor appeared. Sometimes one instructor would teach both classes on the same day; sometimes they would alternate. In general, on days when the classes met for the double period, each instructor taught half of the time. This provided a change of pace and seemed to be welcomed by the students. The instructors also visited each other's classes to observe the presentation of material, techniques, etc..

Both instructors were involved in all aspects of the teaching activity, though technically Dr. Fugate was responsible for both classes. The student instructor was not just a drill instructor, but also frequently introduced new material to the classes. Tests, quizzes, dictations, and grades were all worked out jointly, which sometimes meant that each one was forced to re-examine his position and to defend his point of view in the face of opposition from the other instructor. Both instructors agree that the experience gained here was stimulating and beneficial. The student instructor benefited from the teaching experience and from the necessity of having to master the course material. For the first time she found herself exposed to a situation where she not only had to know a given subject matter, but also had to be able to withstand what sometimes amounted to a withering cross-fire of questions from members of the class. The regular faculty member benefited from the insights gained by close association with the student instructor who had more recently been faced with the problems confronting the classes.

In attempting to evaluate the results of the experiment the reactions of the instructors are of obvious importance. Even more important, though, is the reception accorded the experiment by the students. To aid in determining this a questionnaire was prepared and distributed to all students on the day of the final examination. All students who took the final examination completed and returned the form. (See Appendix for copy of the questionnaire.)

Question 6 asked the students how they felt about having two instructors. Thirty-seven (37) replied "favorable," fourteen (14) said "neutral," and none said "unfavorable." Comments made to this question included: "It was good to have two different viewpoints, but it was disturbing when there were disagreements. Also you never knew which one would have the class that day." "I found that having the same thing explained in two different ways made it more understandable." "The two instructor set-up allowed for variation of atmosphere and approach." "It may have been more uniform with just one instructor." "Would really prefer one!" "The class was more interesting." "If I didn't understand one, the other helped."

Question 7 asked the students to express their feelings about having a student instructor. Thirty (30) replied "favorable," eighteen (18) "neutral," and three (3) "unfavorable." Here is a sampling of the comments: "It is often easier to communicate with another student." "This was beneficial in that it may have given the instructor more insight into the student's problems and perhaps the students may have more understanding of the instructor's position.

"I think a student needs a little more experience. I feel bad that it had to be done on us." "Depends a lot on who the student instructor is." [A number of times.] "Kathy [Miss Young] could better see what I still didn't understand, because she was closer to our level." "Student teaching is for high school (nothing personal)." "It was great!" "The student has more in common with the class."

Question 8 asked the students whose instructional presentation they considered more effective. Twenty-three (23) replied "Fugate," three (3) "Young," and twenty-five (25) "equally effective." Comments included: "Kathy realized which problems were the hardest probably because she was closer to them. But I never was as confident of Miss Young's answers as I was of Dr. Fugate's." "He did not stick strictly to grammar which made his sessions more interesting." "Experience [Referring to Fugate]." "On the more technical points and for the initial presentation of new material, Dr. Fugate was more effective. When it came to ironing out problems, Miss Young's patience made up for any inexperience." "His knowledge is greater and he is far more sure of himself." "I wonder about it if the student instructor wasn't as good as Kathy [frequent comment]."

Finally, question 9 asked the student if, based on this experiment, he would enroll in such a class again if he knew this would be the set-up. Forty-five (45) checked "yes," five (5) "no," and one (1) failed to respond. Comments included: "I think having

two teachers is beneficial [frequent comment]." "This type of class is more effective for in presenting two different methods of teaching it aids in learning." "I don't care for student teaching."

Summary:

1. The results of the questionnaire indicate that having two instructors, one a full-time faculty member and the other a student, generally met with student approval. The experiment can be termed a success.

2. Though this was apparent to both instructors from the beginning, it is obvious that from the student point of view the choice of the student-instructor is critical. The student must not only be in command of the material, but also be able to handle the class. The student instructor must have the respect of his peers. It is perhaps significant to note that there were no upperclassmen in either of the two classes, which already provides for a certain distance between the student-instructor and the class members.

3. The experiment was a valuable learning experience for both instructors.

4. It is interesting to note that most of the critical comments about the student-instructor come from female members of the classes.

5. Major, grade, other courses, etc., seemed to have no influence on the final evaluation of the experiment by the student.

Footnote.

1. The author acknowledges, with thanks, the valuable assistance of Dr. Berne Jacobs, Director of Institutional Research, Kalamazoo College, and Miss Kathleen O. Young.

Appendix

German I Fall 1965

As you know, this class has been conducted on an experimental basis. Your help in <u>frankly</u> evaluating the results of this experiment would be greatly appreciated. You are not obligated to identify yourself by name, but in no case will your opinions affect your grade in the course.

1. Name: (omit if desired)

2. Proposed major:

3. Other two courses this fall: _____

   _____

4. Class:

5. How much German, if any, have you studied before this class?

6. How do you feel about having two instructors in this course?
   _____Favorable Comments:
   _____Neutral
   _____Unfavorable

7. How do you feel about having a student as one instructor?
   _____Favorable Comments:
   _____Neutral
   _____Unfavorable

8. In terms of instructional help, whose presentation was more effective from your point of view?
   _____Fugate Why?:
   _____Young
   _____equally effective

9. Based on this experiment, would you enroll in such a class again if you knew this would be the set-up?
   _____Yes Why?:
   _____No

10. General comments on course: (Use back if necessary)